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# MARIE,

## THE

# BANDIT'S DAUGHTER.

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A

POEM.

NEW-YORK:

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" Il n'est pas si aisé de se faire un nom par un ouvrage parfait, que d'en faire valoir un médiocre par le nom qu'on s'est déjà acquis."

"Que dites-vous du livre d'Hermodore? Qu'il est mauvais, répond Anthime: qu'il est mauvais. Qu'il est tel, continue-t-il, que ce n'est pas un livre, ou qui mérite du moins que le monde en parle. Mais l'avez vous lu? Non, dit Anthime."

La Bruyere.

Chill turf beneath, chill dew above,
None to watch o'er him and to love?
Ah, no, no!—Imprecations vain,
With groans as if of mortal pain,
Assail her all-attentive ear.
Whence came that voice? She lists to hear
Its tones once more—"'Tis he!" she cries,
And eager darts unto the spot.
Low at her feet dying Maddoc lies,
Digging the earth with bleeding nails,
And muttering curses on his lot:
But not 'neath corporal anguish quails
The bandit chieftain's spirit high—
His grief is unavenged to die.

"My father dear!"—a name so loved
To tenderer thoughts his bosom moved;
Slowly his languid head he raised;
His matted locks aside he tossed;
And his brow half its blackness lost,
As on his daughter's face he gazed;
And o'er his lips, unwont to smile,
A gleam of gladness stole the while.
She rent her robe, his wounds to bind—

"Seek not," he said,—"thou ever kind!—
To stay the stroke of Death's stern hand.
When of his true, his valiant band
Not one has scaped this eve's fell strife,
What has their chief to do with life?

Vanquished, of power and pride bereft,
Oh! what on earth has Maddoc left?
—Deep wrongs unwreaked and boundless hate!
—He yields, and respite prays of Death!
O for a little more of breath,
Till proud Count Wardolph 'neath the weight
Of this revengeful arm hath quailed—
And sued for life—and bled—and railed—
And I have gazed, and smiled his soul
Away unto its fiery goal!"

Of such revenge denied, the thought
His tortured mind to frenzy wrought;
Fiercely he sprang unto his feet,
As if a present foe to meet;
He waved his threatening arm on high;
He shrieked defiance to the sky;—
And fell to earth! stretched in his gore,
And weak as wailing infancy!
And with red hands his wounds he tore,
Impatient of the life he bore.

"And wilt thou, father! leave me lone,
To tears and unavailing moan?
Has earth indeed no joy for thee,
Though still the abode of thy Marie?
Oft in adversity's bleak day,
Struggling against its bitterest wrath,
Thou smiledst, and wert wont to say
Thy child beloved should glad thy path.

I none be left to list her lay,
No parent her young cheek to greet
With home-returning kiss, when sweet
The dangers and the toils of fight]
Have made her cabin's flickering light,
Still clasp her to thy clay-cold breast—
Welcome shall be the grave's dark rest!"

Around his neck her arms she twined,
And brush'd death's dew-drops from his brow;
And strove, now to her care resigned,
Of his life-blood to check the flow:
But his pulse faint and fainter grew,
And deadlier of his cheek the hue.

"In vain, in vain thou seekest to stay
My spirit ebbing fast away!
—Wouldst cheer this hour?—With tenderest care,
And doting love unchanged whate'er
Hath still betid of weal or wo,
Nor chilled by time, I've watched o'er thee
Even from thy earliest infancy;
Thou lovest me well: then rouse the fire
Which in a daughter's veins should glow,
Descended from thy dreaded sire—
Thine be the task to venge me now!
Where'er thou stray this poniard bear,
With hate immeasurable, and swear
To know nor joy nor dreamless rest,
Till it be sheathed in Wardolph's breast."

"My heart! leap, leap up at the thought!
All the strong transports of my soul,
With ne'er an alien purpose fraught,
I doom to vengeance' sweet control,
My heart's each thrill and pulse's beat!
Vengeance with hellish ire replete,
On Wardolph and on every foe
With his fell triumph plumed this night!
Ye stars, to you I breathe the vow!
Shrine it within your orbs of light,
Proclaimed whene'er ye greet my sight!
—If haply human deeds ye view,
And my breast's boding voice be true,
The work beholding of my wrath,
The wreck, the ruin on her path
A woman's weakly arm hath made,'
Ye'll joy at wrongs so well repaid!"

She ceased, and with proud brow upraised,
On the blue sky she mutely gazed;
As if expectant heaven's bright host
Would gratulate the impassioned boast!—
The rose's hue was on her cheek,
Mingled with a soft silvery streak
Shed by the moon's unwavering beams;
From her eye flashed unearthly gleams;
And round her sylph-like form her hair
Floated all wild, as if it felt
And loved the night-wind wantoning there.
Had passer's gaze upon her dwelt

While thus she stood amidst the dead,
Tranced in amazement he had said
An angel visitant was come,
To gather from this troubled home
To regions of elysium rest,
A soul with Heaven's approval blessed!

When fell to earth her glance of fire,
It met the eye of her loved sire
Upturned and fixed upon her face,
As there her inmost thoughts to trace:
His pale lips, smiling and apart,
Betokened gladness in his heart.
She bent to kiss;—his brow was chill,
His bosom's feeble throbbings still—
Death had been busy with his clay,
And the life-spark had plucked away.

## II.

The urn of carving rich and rare,
The structure reared with specious care,
The willow's weeping, cypress' gloom,
Nor epitaph upon the tomb,
Thought of the dead can sanctify.
If such incentives mourners need,
Where cold a lost one's ashes lie,
To teach the lukewarm heart to bleed,—
Oh! rather be my love forgot,
My name on earth and burial-spot!

Beneath the shadow of a cave
Marie has scooped dark Maddoc's grave;
Where, screened from careless stranger eye,
Her grief may have its course unchecked.
A mound of earth ye'd scarce espy,
With no memorial emblem decked,
Was all that marked the spot where slept
In death a father fondly wept.

Yes, fondly wept!—though ye might shame
The link of brotherhood to claim
With one that crime had sunk so low.
Few virtues were to Maddoc given,

(Which teach the kindly soul to glow
With foretaste of the sweets of heaven!)
At any shrine he sdeigned to bow,
And hatred for the human race
Within his heart claimed lordly place:
Unmoved he hearkened to the cry
Of victims in death-agony;
The blood of mothers, babes, he spilt,
Nor knew remorse for deeds of guilt.
But spite of his breast's ruggedness,
He loved his child; her dear caress
Had power to soothe—to cheer—to bless!
The maid, cut off from intercourse
With beings of a better mould,
And doomed the bandit's lawless course
From childhood's dawning to behold,
Inured to guilt and bloodshed grew,
Nor of a life more sainted knew.
Hers was the youthful bosom's burning—
The fatal boon—the natural yearning
A resting-place for love to know—
The living stream which needs must flow—
And her soul scorned its pride to bow
To any of the ruffian band
That crouched beneath her sire's command:
Debarred the fervent dream of youth,
—When fond heart into fond heart pours
The deep wealth of its hoarded stores,
The fever at its core to soothe—

Ran o'er in filial tenderness
Affection's unrestrained excess.

O'er Maddoc's grave she bent with morn,
And noon beholds her weeping there;
The hues of sunset earth adorn,
And still she kneels in her despair.
'Twas solemn night when she arose,
And listless wandered forth—as goes
The outcast on his hopeless way—
Unmindful where her feet might stray.
She reached the margin of the wood.
Amid the gleaming moon-lit scene,
And smiled on by the sky serene,
Before her Wardolph Castle stood
Alone in awful majesty.
Her bosom beat tumultuously!

"Fortress of Maddoc's foe!" she cried,
"Turrets! that rear your heads on high,
As if, instinct with human pride,
Ye dared heaven's thunderbolts defy,
Nor deigned to heed earth's meaner war—
Glorious and beautiful ye are!
How often from my far retreat
My willing steps did truant rove,
Your cloud-capped pinnacles to greet—
To gaze in wonder and in love!
—'Tis past! doomed is your latest date,
And I do joy me at your fate!

In the glad future, my fond eye
Beholds ye toppling from on high!
—And o'er the ruin broods my sire,
Smiling away his cherished ire!"

With frantic laugh of exultation,
She hailed the imagined desolation!
Then nearer to the castle's wall
With cautious footstep light she drew.
To-night holds Wardolph festival?
Sure lights unwonted meet her view;
And music, tuned to notes of glee,
Gives token too of revelry.

## III.

In Wardolph Castle's halls to-night
Gay throngs are met, to celebrate
The day—the joyful day!—when Fate
Propitious smiled upon the fight
Which rids at length the groaning land
Of Maddoc's devastating brand.
Many a heart there lightly beats,
Smiles on the lip of beauty gleam,
And not an eye but laughing greets
The gaze that lingers on its beam.
Young Mirth, his brow with radiance wreathed,
Is there; and potent spells has breathed—
His garland's choicest blossoms shed,
To bloom beneath the revellers' tread.
And there are maidens passing fair,
—At whose command the knight of yore,
Sans doubt, would dreariest wilds explore,
Or dreadest foe to combat dare,
And vanquished, death's grim terrors spurn,
The meed of one sweet smile to earn!—
Amid the loveliest, lovelier yet
Is young Clotilde.

On her white brow,
Where Grief forbore a line to plough,

Purity's self her seal had set.
Hers were the shape of winged lightness,
The flowing locks of golden brightness,
And the meek aspect, which invest
The beings our ravished thoughts portray
Within the bowers of the blessed!
Yet not the maid the enthusiast's lay
Extols, she seemed—of heavenly birth,
And wildered on this stranger earth;—
But born for human weal and wo;
With grief to thrill, with joyance glow;
To mourn, at others' sorrows moved;
To love—in vain, or be beloved.
Yet was she in her springtime years,
Each hope vouchsafed that life endears,
And plight to Agar,—Wardolph's son,
The heir to a far-honored name,
But whose green age not yet had won
By deeds of his the meed of fame.
Happy she was!—oh, it was bliss
Even to behold such happiness!
Happy she was!—but will it last,
The future cloudless as the past?

O woman! well we know that tears
Are the unfailing dower of years;
That fleeting is thy early mirth,
And griefs will bow thee to the earth;
Yet magic has thy youth to bless,
Arrayed in helpless loveliness!

Ere thy glad feet have wandered far
From sportive childhood's sunny range,
Ere the deep shine of some loved star
Has kindled passions fierce as strange,
While Innocence and Beauty spread
A halo round thy virgin head—
Oh, we do gaze on thee and smile!
Dismayed not by the hate and guile,
The withering crosses and distress,
Soon, soon to haunt thy joyous bower,
Its branches strip of leaf and flower,
And blast for aye with barrenness!
—'Tis well!—Sweet charmer! if for thee,
The while we gaze, full bitterly
Salt tear on tear bedews the eye,
And the heart wafts a prayer on high,—
These tears give only fruitless pain,
And our petitions rise in vain!

The dance is o'er, the feast is spread—
The guests around the board are ranged,
And quaff the mantling wine-cup red,
Their thoughts from aught but mirth estranged.

Within the hall, with harp in hand,
A minstrel waits his lord's command.
'Tis signed: peals forth a merry strain,
That sinks into a mournful tone;
Then rises into joy again,
And dies into a sorrowing moan.

And strangely, wildly mingling still
Glad notes with grief's ungenial trill,
The bard, unto the festive throng,
—Now sad, now gay—thus breathed his song:—

"His courser's distant tramp no more
Shall wake the ear to watchfulness;
Nor his voice thrill to the heart's core,
Where brightens household blessedness.
His home is dark; he's far away:
Alack the day!

"Fill high the cup with generous wine!
And while the teeming fumes ascend,
Sweet incense, to the throne Divine,
With wreaths of fragrance rich we'll blend,
For him that's gone—he told not where—
A fervent prayer.

"The warrior, at his chief's command,
Exulting braves the deadliest strife;
The parent, for his little band
Of helpless young ones, stakes his life:
The land was rescued when *he* bled—
The happy dead!

"Fill high the cup,—and Maddoc, hail!
Thy future welfare to control,
If this our festal pledge avail—
Joy to thy disembodied soul!

Its home shall be—'twill suit thee well—
With fiends of hell!"

The cup was raised—but ere the draught
Gaily the willing guests had quaffed,
While in the listening ear yet rung
The scoff the wayward minstrel sung,
A voice that seemed not of the earth
Broke in upon the gushing mirth:—

"With boastful cry the famished crow
May banquet on the mighty dead!
—Even while the archer bends the bow,
And the angry shaft is wellnigh sped,
Winged on its swift, unerring way
To its doomed prey!"

Count Wardolph started, with wild eye
The guests in silence gazed around,
And the bard cowed him to the ground;
They peered forth from the lattice high,
But sought in vain whence came a voice
So strange where all must needs rejoice:
And these words, on the mind impressed,
That night perturbed each reveller's rest.

## IV.

O the bright scenes of childhood's hours!
How truly we do love the spot
Where hath been cast our early lot!
The meads where our young hands pluck flowers,
The paths where our young footsteps stray,
The shade where our young head we lay!—
Marie was born within the wild,
And fostered there—the forest's child;
And was no shrub beneath its shade
That with indifference she surveyed.
But in affection partial ever,
Something from things most loved we sever,
To cherish and to love apart,—
To shrine more closely in the heart:
One scene she prized above the rest,
And made her oftest-sought retreat.

Rarely intrusive stranger's feet
That dear haunt's hallowed sod had pressed;
For beaten pathway there was not,
Inviting to the lonely spot.
Shaded from the too-garish day,
The only access rugged lay,
By steps unused pursued with toil,
Up the flow of a purling tide,

Whose bright waves, o'er a rock-strown soil,
Deep-bosomed in a valley glide.
As upward turns the freer gaze
At the utmost bound of this dark glen,
The blue sky greets the eye again;
But where the gazer stands, his rays
Sol for a brief space only pours,
While in meridian sky he soars.
Curving and high, on each side frown
Steep banks with dwarfish pines o'ergrown,
And gemmed with flowers that glad the view,
Robed in their loveliest wildwood hue.
In front a fair and laughing stream,
(Incautious as the fond heart's dream!)
Leaping from its exalted bed,
Is midway dashed against a rock;
And wide divided by the shock,
The waters in vexed currents spread,
While soars above the trembling spray,
Glitters, and melts in air away.
But downward still rolls wave on wave,
Frothing, and broken oft again,
Until the valley's depth they lave—
Recede in circling ripples then,
And all-unruffled they flow on
As if they nought of wrath had known.

Marie with dark and sullen brow
Beholds this scene of beauty now:

Around her broods unwonted gloom,
Even upon the floweret's bloom!

Flowerets! fair growth of this strange earth!
Are ye instinct with sympathy
With man? In his brief hours of mirth,
Do ye not smile with answering glee?
When spirit-wrung, bowed down by grief,
Views he not mourning on each leaf?
Perchance 'tis sooth! who bade ye blow,
Taught ye when the heart joyed to know,—
And ye do thrill with gladness too,
Donning the while a richer hue;
And the same Power—we learn not why—
In wrath refused of human wo
The bitter knowledge to deny,—
And therefore early do ye die!
The loveliest things with tenderest fears
Will sorrow for the curse man bears.

The bright cascade, unto her ear,
With grating discord murmured near;
And in the troubled current there,
A type, she deemed, of her despair
She saw. But lo! it bathes her feet,
With its first purity replete,
Serene, as if it ne'er had striven!
When shall such peace to her be given?
Above the placid stream she bent,
Envying its soulless, sweet content;

And tears of anguish with its joy,
Fast gushing, mingled their alloy.

Hark! to the ringing laugh subdued,
By light winds wafted through the wood!
'Tis Agar and Clotilde, that love
Has led in loneliest paths to rove.
Over the crystal streamlet's bed
Pursuing slow their rugged way,
With agile and familiar tread
They leap from rock to rock away—
Unchecked their laughter, whether failing,
Or in some daring feat prevailing.
They reach Marie. Steeped deep in grief,
She did not mark their presence nigh.
With woman's angel charity,
That prompts to minister relief
To every being with moistened eye,
Clotilde beside her lowly leant,
And in soft, winning accents—sweet
As the dew to the young plant sent,
Reviving from the noontide heat—
She strove unto her anguished heart
The balm of comfort to impart.

"Fair sister, why this flood of tears?
At dark bereavement doth it flow,
And future crowded thick with fears?
But though severe affliction's blow,
None are left desolate below:

Our God is with us, and his love
Unchanged—all earthly things above!"

Marie in silence turned, the dell
To quit—not deigning a farewell.
But gently round her neck the while
Clotilde's encircling arms were twined,
Her steps to stay; and with a smile
That spoke reproof—though not unkind—
And gazing wistful in her face,
She clasped her in a close embrace.

"Wilt thou not tell thy soul's distress?
To make the sum of sorrow less,
Perchance my friending will avail.
Betrayed to lonely tears and wail,
The victim of a ruthless fate,
Here wanderest thou? The unfortunate
Count Wardolph loves: my Agar's sire
Their wants to tend doth never tire:
With him the weary cease to roam,
The houseless sufferer hails a home."

His plighted bride's desire to aid,
Agar, in suppliant tones which said
'Twas they that did a favor crave,
Then proffered to the stranger maid
His arm to shield her and to save.

Marie, with still sad aspect, sought
To cloak joy that within her wrought.

Indeed shall Wardolph Castle's lord—
Her slaughtered father's bitterest foe—
Whose triumph doomed her endless wo—
The being on earth she most abhorred!
—Shall he, within his very hall,
Seek to protect her fenceless head!
—Vengeance may then more subtly spread
Her snares, and speed him to his fall;
For blood—blood shall requite his care!

Meekly she bowed a mute assent
To the young lovers' urgent prayer;
And towards the hospitable pile
Together then their steps they bent.
With guileless hearts, o'erjoyed the while
At soothing of another's pain,
Bound on their way the affianced twain;
Marie, on gloomy thoughts intent,
Plotted proud vengeance as she went.

## V.

Imparadised in love's deep dream,
How rapturous is the young heart's bliss!
Heavenlier than aught which may beseem
A world so cold, so dark as this!—
Clotilde with all the fervor loved,
When woman's bosom first is moved;
Ere even a thrill is wasted yet
In thoughts of one she'll soon forget;
Or ere hope's budding tree in vain
Hath shed a green leaf on the plain;
When love meets love; and no unrest,
Nor fear of evil, haunts the breast;
And forth from the unsealed cell
Where passion's living waters well,
Freely they gush—fresh, pure, and bright,
Baring its hallowed depth to light.
'Tis sweet!—yet Wisdom views with grief
A love so true—such fond belief
In things so frail, of date so brief!

Alas! that wildest bliss should fade
Ere well 'tis grasped!—and joy nor pain
Can fill the void which it hath made.
Night-wanderers o'er a starless main,

Our bark drifts on its weary way:
Rocks gleam ahead—but nought have they
The blood to chill; a haven's near—
We reck not, it holds nothing dear.—
Alas! the hearts that most have felt
Of this world's blessings the rare joy;
That here have in elysium dwelt,
Unvisited by griefs' annoy;
When wo befalls, are doomed to bear
A twofold portion of despair!—
Happy as ever prayer besought
Hath been till now thy earthly lot,
Clotilde! Shall e'er Adversity
Her blighting mildew shed o'er thee?
Oh, rather—hail, the early tomb!
Come Death! and shield her from the doom!

Of him she loves, betide what will,
How strangely proud is woman still!
O'er sins there drops a mystic veil
While passion's feverish throbs prevail;
She gazes with perverted glance,
Which merit small doth far enhance—
Doth perfect what is vain indeed—
And oft to guilt grant virtue's meed!
To reason's sober urgings blind,
Much doth it wilder her warped mind
To note that many nought esteem
The being her thoughts so matchless deem.

'Tis grateful to her ear, the voice
That speaks unbid her lover's praise:
Approval true of him, her choice,
Doth much the friend in friendship raise.
If harsh or careless lips proclaim
An evil word against his fame,
Hatred within her gentle breast
May darkly bide—though unexpressed.

Availing her of such deceit
As hollow laud of one so well,
So truly loved—an incense sweet,
Preferred where passion's tremors dwell—
Of young Clotilde the heart to gain,
Guileful Marie strove not in vain.

Oft stood they at their lattice high,
Greeting the morn with loving eye,
And gazing on the gallant show
Of huntsmen in the court below;
Who, borne by proudly-pawing steeds,
And burning to achieve high deeds
Their hands imbruing in the blood
Of the wild tenants of the wood,
With busy hopes and hearts elate
The signal to depart await.
When loud the expected blast was sounded,
Started the cavalier and steed,
And through the wide-oped portal bounded
Like captives from inthralment freed;

And the young maidens o'er the plain
Followed, with silent glance, the train:
But 'tis to Agar's plumed crest,
Dancing aloft in Sol's first rays,
As high it towers above the best,
That clings Clotilde's impassioned gaze.
When in the distance lost to sight,
Or in the embowering forest's maze,
And even love—endowed with might
More potent than the magian's lore—
With all its skill can shape no more
A shadowy form, to glad the eye
Which seeks the loved one to descry,
She drooped, with gentle grief oppressed,
Within Marie's officious arms;—
Who then essayed to lull to rest
Affection's vision-bred alarms,
Discoursing long the aspect fair,
Soul-stirring glance, and manly air
Of Agar—he, the brave, the proud,
Before her influence humbly bowed.
With converse such as this—not dull
When with its love the heart is full—
Stern absence was beguiled of pain,
Till eve the lovers joined again.

Clotilde with all her fervent soul,
Whene'er she loved, owned love's control.
Towards Marie her bosom yearned
The hour they met; ere in her race
Twice waxed and waned the moon's wan face,

The maid, a stranger late, had earned
A rich, confiding love, as rife
With bliss as aught that gladdens life—
The love a virgin sister bears
A sister!—sisters who have been
Unsevered from their infant years;
Who to the same great God unseen
Have oft in meek devotion knelt.
The while one breathed what either felt;
And on the same soft couch of rest,
Within each other's white arms pressed,
Been lulled unto the same repose;
Together bowed when this world's woes
Their heaven of mutual joy o'ercast;
Together, the chill shadow past,
Cheered by the reappearing sun,
As but one heart he shone upon!
The love of sisters!—if above,
Hovering around the Almighty's throne,
Angels their fellow-angels love,
'Tis surely with a love like this—
Not, even in heaven, unvalued bliss!

Alas! that oft our holiest trust
We lavish at an evil shrine—
Lured by a silky viper's shine,
Whetting his fangs for a death-thrust!—
Marie with seeming warmth returned
Clotilde's devotedness unfeigned,
The while that hate within her burned;

For her sworn vengeance' ire doth blend
Clotilde with foes it must pursue—
Who on their heads the deep curse drew.

But not of kind Clotilde alone,
Marie the love sincere possessed:
Within the castle dwelt not one
Who did not brook with fallen crest
Her frown though gentle, and the while
Was happier when she deigned to smile.
Mystery, that with impervious veil
Shadowed her birth and childhood's tale,
But seemed to render her more dear:
Full eagerly we welcome aught
With something strange, unfathomed fraught,
Unlike the weary sameness here.
When friendship urged her to relate
The story of her early fate,
At least to speak her father's name;
She told that it was linked with fame,
But nothing of his state revealed,
Pleading a vow, her lips that sealed
Until a task of import high
Accomplished freed her to reply.

And now a parting hour is come.
With noble Angevine, her sire,
Obedient ever to his desire,
Clotilde prepares to seek her home;—

A moon of loneliness and pain
To watch upon its lingering way,
Ere Agar she may meet again—
Then met to bless her bridal day.
Upon her prancing palfrey seated,
Already is the farewell said;
But still to part Clotilde delayed,
And of Marie once more entreated
Her journey to consent to share.
As erst, Marie denied the prayer,
Urging, with tears of well-feigned grief,
Stern duty which forbade her stray,
Truant for even a space but brief,
To far and stranger scenes away.

Agar his ready steed bestrides,
Intent to wend with her awhile;
Defer the moment that divides;
And the sad day, with many a smile
And glance of love, and vows that bless,
To cheat of part its weariness.

## VI.

The parting's o'er, and they are gone:
Marie, thou art unmarked—alone!—
She darted towards the neighboring wood,
Rejoicing!—not in gladder mood
The long-caged lion, lately free,
—Proud and reborn with liberty!—
Once more bounds o'er his native plain,
And rears aloft his head again,
And hearkens to his kingly cry
Ringing unto the far-off sky!—
Hail wildwood, her once happy home!
The paths that she was wont to roam!
The silence—gloom—and loneliness!—
But scarce she paused mid scenes so dear,
And strove the transport to repress:
A grave she seeks—to offer there
The tribute of a soul-felt tear.

Concealed within the sheltering cave,
With knitted brow and steeped in thought,
She bent above her father's grave.
Oh! poignant is the pang that wrings
The heart bereaved—the mind distraught—
In solitude, when drooping o'er
The grave of one to whom it clings,
The bright smile quenched for evermore!

Gazing upon the turf that lies
Greenly above the narrow bed;
The turf that screens from aching eyes
Their idol—reckless of the dead!
—The dead, our arms may ne'er infold;
The dead, that worm-polluted clay
In chill embrace is doomed to hold;
The dead, to hungry maws a prey!
—O for an eye to pierce more deep
Into the dark, defiled repair,
And keep watch o'er the dreamless sleep
Of the loved corse unfriended there!

Lo! with pale lips in silence parting,
And eyeballs from their sockets starting;
Her form recoiling in dismay,
And hands outreached to fend away;
She stands, like stone, immovable—
But fearful is her bosom's swell!
—Ha! from the sepulchre released,
'Tis Maddoc rises to her sight!
To sate his wrath, yet unappeased,
Returns he with a fiend's fell might?
—His eye can boast no lustre now;
Upon his scarred and livid brow
The dews of death are gathered still;
And from his wounds ensanguined rain
Streams like a troubled mountain rill;
Yet high he bears his front again,

Frowning—as if to wreak his hate
With dire resolve regenerate.

Brief the dismay of bold Marie.
She roused her spirit's energy;
And gazing on the vision still,
Her pulse tumultuous beat more free,
And her blood coursed without a chill.
Then in a voice, though firm, repressed,
The dead-revived her lips addressed:—

"Welcome, dread likeness of my sire!
Phantasm, born of my fond desire!
Or spirit, from thy mortal part
Enfranchised!—whatsoe'er thou art!—
But, father! say—comest thou in ire
To chide a daughter's dull delay?
Or deeming there is need to fire
Her bosom for the avenging day?
Thinkest thou that, heedless grown, Marie
Devotes her all no more to thee?—
Erewhile, with herbs had she prepared
For Maddoc's foes a beverage meet;
But she forbore—lest some were spared,
And her task ever incomplete.
Her arm the dagger's point hath reared
Above unconscious Wardolph's breast,
Stretched on his midnight couch of rest
While dreams unwatchful vassals cheered;

But paused—for it had weary grown
Before the bloody work were done.
—Yet doubt not vengeance shall requite
Her care—my only hope of joy!
Vengeance delayed, with keener blight
To torture—madden—and destroy!"

She ceased. The spectre smoothed his frown,
Upon his horrid aspect shone
A fleeting smile—and he was gone!

Agar has parted from his love.
Within the hall, with sullen brow,
Silent and thoughtful, stalks he now.
His breast to mirth can nothing move:
Lovers will pine their life away,
When exiled from its sole delight;
Sunless and cheerless is their day,
And restless is their couch at night.
The chase no more his thoughts employs:
Its warlike pageant, eager stir,
And breathless hopes no more are joys—
They wake no memory of *her*.
Marie's soft voice has kindliest power
To soothe the weary absent hour,
Still charming his attentive ear
With talk of one he holds so dear.

To listen to such converse sweet
The while his heart's with gloom replete,

Now with Marie he seeks each scene
Made hallowed by another's tread,
Where his Clotilde's light foot hath been.
Together the wood's paths they thread;
Together scale the mountain's brow;
Together list the waters flow;
Together watch the setting sun,
Saddening when his glad course is run;
Together view the spangled night,
Peopling each star with fancies bright;——

But tune a funeral dirge! wo! wo!
The curse of man and Him above,
A quenchless fire, within thee glow,
Agar, vile traitor to thy love!
—Marie's soft smile and subtle art
Full soon have won the lover's heart;
And from that shrine with careless brow
The maid deceived is banished now,
That hearkened to his earlier vow.

The miscreant, who at dead of night
Our coffers robs of gold we claim;
The villain, who with adder blight
The innocent strips of spotless fame;
The assassin, with infuriate knife
Who plucks away a brother's life;
With common voice we execrate.
And shall we brand with lighter hate

Who spoils a maiden, in her spring,
Of her young heart—and with it toys
Awhile—then tramples—and destroys?
A maid's young heart!—to her a thing
Than gold, or fame, or life, more dear;
The purest emanation here
Vouchsafed from Him that we revere!

## VII.

In wild, heart-thrilling visions, bright
With fancy's coloring of delight,
Revels the maid betrothed to him,
The idol of the sunny days
Of girlhood Care forbears to dim.
Her joy no fear of evil stays,
Pondering the page unturned of fate.
What recks she of the long adieu
To youth's still happy virgin state?
Bliss only opens to her view,
Soft smiling through the vista gay
Of years to come; that flowerets deck,
And where perennial sunbeams play—
No wintry wind—no frost—no wreck!—
Her heaven of hopes wellnigh possessed,
If disappointment o'er her breast
Sweep with its raven, fiend-like wings,
The wo it breeds—the blight it brings—
Tongue cannot tell, nor thought divine!
—Alas, Clotilde! such blight is thine!

Dawns on the dome of Angevine
The morn named for the nuptial rite
Of fair Clotilde, and the young knight
Of proud Count Wardolph's ancient line.—

'Tis noon. The guests in rich array
Arrive to grace the festive day,
The father on his daughter smiles
His love—but Agar, where is he?
The sumptuous feast the hour beguiles,
The brimming cup and the wild glee.—
'Tis night. And at the altar burn
The tapers, and ye may discern
The priest, the holy seal to set,
And of young love resolve the fate
For aye—but Agar comes not yet!
The guests exclaim—"He tarries late!"
Then darkened Angevine's haught brow.
He paced the hall with hasty stride,
Pondering the while his outraged pride,
And his fond, trusting daughter's wo,
If now disdained by him who strove,
And won—a woman's all—her love.
Far other fears Clotilde dismay:
Unnumbered perils fancy shaped,
Which all beset her lover's way—
And these, O God! has he escaped?
His coming do not these delay?—
Night wears—and wanes. Their hopes were vain;
Ne'er to the altar Agar came,
The troth of fair Clotilde to claim.
As mournfully the glittering train
Of disappointed guests depart,
For her is many an aching heart.

The morrow's morn the rumor brought,
With strange, mistrusted tidings fraught,
That Agar for Marie confessed
That throbbed alone his altered breast,
And boldly reckless who might chide,
Clotilde rejected as his bride.
A shape of truth none could impeach,
Ere long the whispered rumor wore:
And none a malison forbore,
Indignant at such dastard breach
Of faith in love, and in the plight
Reta'en alone with honor's blight.

Clotilde had hearkened to the tale.
She saw her bright-hued visions fade,
Her fairy-land a desert made!
Yet wild or loud was not her wail.
With mind composed and scarce a sigh,
Aspect serene and tearless eye,
She sought her father's wrath to quell,
And from his brow the gloom dispel;
As filial duty claimed her care
More than her bankrupt heart's despair.
But the deep voice of solitude
Pursued her with an angrier mood,
When memory o'er the radiant past
A lingering glance regretful cast—
The shipwrecked mariner's thought of home,
Sinking, o'erwhelmed, beneath the foam!

Ever watchful of her father's rest,
To spare the pang that rent his breast
When aught of grief his child distressed,
As if in her no change were wrought,
Her wonted pastimes still she sought,
And at the social board she still
Did her accustomed duties fill,
And for the guests a smile she wore
As sweet as it had been before:
But pale her cheek—the only token
That her wo-burdened heart was broken.

On leaden wing three days have fled,
And not a ray of comfort shed.
Again 'tis morn. Hushed is her moan;
But nigh her couch, sad and alone,
Clotilde still broods o'er hours by-gone:
(Her couch she has not pressed the night,
And flickers still her lamp's pale light.)
Hark!—is't her father's step draws near?
From her swoln eye she dashed the tear—
And rose—and fell in his embrace—
And kissed, and kissed his aged cheek—
And smiled, to hide the care-worn trace
Which doth of keenest anguish speak.
Even with the fond dove's cherishing
Of the dear young beneath her wing,
The grey-haired sire close to his breast
With straining arms her frail form pressed;

And as her faded bloom he viewed,
Salt drops his manly eyes bedewed.

"Child of my love! ere his white head
Were laid to its eternal rest
In the chill mansion of the dead,
Thee to behold a mother blessed
Hath been thy father's dearest care—
His matin hope—his evening prayer.
'Twas joy to dream that to my tomb
Thy children would choice flowerets bring,
—Rivalled by their own cherub bloom!—
The infant offering there to fling;
And gladly list to hear thee tell
What erst their loved grandsire befell,
And how he lived, and how he died.
—Adieu, adieu, fond hopes denied!
The spoiler with fell scythe has come,
And swept the promise from my home.—
But look from thy high lattice—lo,
Armed warriors crowd the plain below!
Our neighboring lords my injuries feel,
Espouse my cause, and thirst to deal
On Wardolph Castle the just meed
My wakened anger hath decreed.
We march within an hour—ere night
Glutted shall be the ravenous kite!"

"Forbear, my father! oh, forbear!
Thinkest thou to wash away with gore

The seared heart's anguish and despair,
And, haply, its lost hue restore?
To Agar do we hatred owe?
He loved me once; on one more fair—
More worthy—that love's lavished now:
But may we bind the heart in chains?
Beats it as human rule ordains,
Whate'er betide, still, still the same?
His love though changed, not his the blame.
My father! if thou dost not seek
To add more bitter to my wo,
Thou wilt thy purpose yet forego,
Disdaining fancied wrongs to wreak."

"To bid proud Angevine refrain
To act as honor's voice commands,
In vain thou bendest the knee, in vain
Thy tears bedew a parent's hands.
Thy gentle spirit may forgive;
But one pulsation of his ire
To bate, were dastard in thy sire—
Thus outraged, unavenged to live:
This day a fitter tale shall tell.
And hark! the trumpet calls—farewell!"

"Thou shalt not go!—to thee I cling
Even with my heart-strings' frenzied clasp;
My arms thou canst not from thee wring,
But with my faintest, latest gasp.

—Thou spurn me too!—thou lovest me not!
—'Tis meet thy fondness be forgot;
Or midst the clash of arms—take heed!
With each fell weapon raised—each blow
That anger levels at a foe—
Perchance thy daughter's breast will bleed!"

The father paused not to reply;
He went. Awhile with vacant eye
She stood—and then one piercing cry
Burst madly forth—and prone she fell,
Unconscious and immovable.

A voice of mourning lades the gale!
—But hush the strain! for maiden's fate
Need ye with dirge prolonged bewail,
When spared the doom to linger late,
Slow withering, in sorrow's vale?
A grave's the heavenliest place on earth
For the heart that has lost its mirth!

## VIII.

Declining in the heavens, the sun
More than one half his course has run.
On Wardolph's highest turret slow
The sentinel strides to and fro;
And mindful that the hour is nigh
The sight he seeks should greet his eye,
The distant landscape scans with care,
To mark the first new semblance there.
He pauses—armor sure hath beams
Like to this far-off sheen, he deems:
He winds his ready horn—a long,
Loud blast, which echoes still prolong,
Rings through the castle's ample halls:
To arms that blast each inmate calls.

Wardolph surveyed the approaching foe:
Their number three times doubled those
Above whose heads his banner rose.
Not rashly did his bosom glow
To dare the conflict in the field,
Assured his weaker band must yield:
With caution meet he closed his gate,
The attack within his walls to wait.

Beside his father Agar stood
In deeply meditative mood,

His breast with gnawing anguish wrung:
Nigh o'er his home destruction hung,
And could not conscience' voice disown
His guilt had called the ruin down.
Fast friends, whose aid was ne'er denied,
With Wardolph late refused to side;
Disdaining on the embattled field
Their swords in such a cause to wield.
Yet Agar was not born for shame,
And sought he to redeem his name:—

"Thy blessing ere I go, my sire!
I leave thee—'tis to seek our foe,
Alone, unarmed; to bend me low,
And tender, to appease their ire,
My naked head;—and they'll relent—
Justice with my life-blood content."

"Rash boy, thou ravest: the die is thrown;
To save remains with heaven alone.
Now to thy station haste repair,
And for the approaching strife prepare."

Agar replied not; words are vain,
He knew, when Wardolph's lips ordain.
He turned and went upon his way,
As if the mandate to obey;
But sought Marie.—With arms outspread
They met, and mingling tears they shed,
And burning, burning was their kiss—
Perchance their last of earthly bliss!

"Here darkly danger lowers—Marie,
Dearest! this is no spot for thee.
Thou knowest the vault our wandering feet,
Adventurous, 'neath these halls explored;
While threatens death, 'twill safe retreat
And rescue to my love afford.
Its course pursue: afar away,
Nigh to the shelter of the wood,
Where no step hostile will intrude,
It opens to the beam of day.
Thence hie thee to the neighboring cave
Where humbly swells a nameless grave,
And bide concealed,—and should heaven spare
Thy Agar's life, he'll meet thee there."

They parted.—Weepest thou still, Marie!
What fears thy throbbing breast appal?
This day may wreck proud Wardolph's hall,
And he, and Agar too, may fall;
But is their doom a grief to thee?
For Agar thou didst fondness feign,
Thy purposed vengeance to attain;
Thy heart—but human hearts are frail!
The lyre may not control the gale
That fans it with unbidden wings,
And wakes rich music from its strings;
The heart, obedient to its fate,
Full often loves when it would hate.
Marie, thou lovest!—and these tears tell
How deeply, oh, how much too well!

Nor smite thy brow, thy tresses rend,
Nor hope to spurn that love away;
In vain, in vain, to scape its sway,
Young bleeding hearts with love contend.

Now hot and hotter grows the strife,
And lavish is the waste of life;
And loud and louder sounds of fear
Assail Marie's unheeding ear.
Starting, from a deep trance she woke.
"'Tis time!" she shrieked; and ruth forsook
Her breast, and in her eye's dark ray,
With frenzy, fierce resolve was blent.—
To light her subterranean way,
A torch she held; and ere she went,
The flame she kindled—doomed to wrap
The castle in unfond embrace,
And its foundations subtly sap,
And turrets hurl from their high place.

The sun into his ocean bed
Is sinking, and his latest rays
Upon the mountain top are shed.—
Marie has thread the cavern's maze;
And pauses, one fond glance—a last—
Towards the castle now to cast.
—The castle, home of her best friends,
Whence thickly the dun smoke ascends
In one huge column far on high,
Shadowing the gaudy hues of fire

Sol flings athwart the azure sky!
—And 'tis her lover's funeral pyre
That blazes, lighted by her hands!
With gaze intent awhile she stands,
And heaving breast—then fled away,
To hide her from the face of day.

The grot she reached, where envied slept
Maddoc beneath the heavy clay.
Hers was not then a grief that wept;
To voiceless, ague pangs a prey,
Above his chilly grave she lay.

What hasty tread the grotto nears?
'Tis Agar! Scaped from foe and fire,
He comes, and in his strong arms bears
The bleeding form of his brave sire.

Count Wardolph's bandaged brow is white,
With effort faint he draws his breath,
And bides within his eye a blight—
Tokens of close-impending death.
Kindly he gazed upon the maid,
And smiled, and strove to speak his thought;
But his pale lips refused their aid,
Or uttered only sounds not fraught
With meaning. Then her hand he placed
In Agar's hand, and cast on high
A tearful and beseeching eye,
For blessings on the love he graced

With his dying sanction—which yet pride
Unto the lovers had denied.
Marie unmoved stood by his side.

"Wardolph!" she said, "dost thou descend
With blood of thine my blood to blend,
The stock unknown whence sprang Marie!
'Tis meet the while that she impart
A tale undreamed of yet by thee—
A tale which may not glad thy heart!—
On the red field her father fell;
She gathered up his latest breath,
And soothed his spirit's sad farewell,
With deep-sworn vows to venge his death—
Though weak her arm—upon the foe,
And all his house, who struck him low—
And 'twas thy ruin she decreed!—
And thou art fallen, thy vassals stilled
For aye—and is not mine the deed?—
But vengeance is not yet fulfilled!
Claims vanquished Maddoc, my stern sire,
Another victim of my ire!"

The while to these fell words he listened,
Of purport that he dared not trust,
A poniard, in her grasp that glistened,
Deep in young Agar's breast she thrust—
Deep in the breast beloved full well!
He reeled, and to the earth he fell

Gasping—and sank into the sod
Of Maddoc's grave the atoning blood.
Upon his prostrate corse she trod;
The crimsoned steel she brandished high;
And frantic rushed into the wood,
Shrieking mad triumph to the sky!

---

Many a year within that wood
A maiden dwelt, of sullen mood,
Fair aspect wild, and loose arrayed
In tattered weeds—whom none might see,
And shrink not with a shuddering dread.
This maniac maiden was MARIE.

THE END.

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